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7/29/65

The Honorable H. A. Abernethy
Commissioner, Federal Supply Service
General Services Administration
15th and "F" Streets, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20405

Dear Commissioner Abernethy:

The Central Intelligence Agency has learned that General Services Administration has under consideration a proposal to establish a single awards contract for security cabinets to replace the multiple awards contract now in effect.

As we made known previously, through our representative on the Interagency Advisory Committee on Security Equipment, this Agency is opposed to single source awards in the vital field of security cabinets. It is our feeling that much of the progress which has been made over the past several years in the development of better security cabinets is directly attributable to the present practice of multiple awards contracts. Further, the limiting of supply availability to a single source could result in the non-availability of security containers for an indefinite period, if the manufacturing capability of the single source was interrupted for any reason. This, of course, would have an adverse effect on the security program of this Agency.

In view of the security considerations involved, it would be reassuring to know that the multiple contract awards for security cabinets will remain in effect so that the agencies of the Government, involved in the handling of sensitive security information, will be assured of the continued availability of security cabinets of the highest quality and security.

Howard J. Osborn
Director of Security

OS/PhySD/[redacted]/vht 27 Jul 65

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STATEMENT BY [REDACTED] CIA, SAFE TECHNICIAN

Sometime in September 1969, Central Depot received approximately 130 Hillside Class VI filing cabinets. It is my responsibility to inspect these units before putting them in stock for subsequent issue. Upon my inspecting a number of these units, I determined that a lot of them were very shoddy in construction: locks were loose; there were sharp edges on the drawers and cabinet structures; many sharp edges on weldments; and the metal cover latch scraped the latch hole and developed jagged metal burrs. It was also noted that these cabinets did not meet the specifications of AA-F-358e Int. Specifically, I took exception to the fact that it was possible to secure the lock drawer with any other drawer open three inches or less from the fully closed position. Also, drawer pulls were loose, latches were not installed properly, and the drawer metal covers were in a partially open condition when the drawer began its opening cycle prior to depressing of the latch.

Since all of the aforementioned problems were of major concern, it was apparent that I had to have help from the Office of Security, Technical Branch (OS/TB). [REDACTED] of the OS/TB inspected some of the Class VI cabinets at the depot and agreed that action must be taken by our Agency to get GSA to take back all of the 130 units and return them to Hillside Metal Products for repair, etc. Through the remainder of 1969 and early 1970, various efforts were made to correct the problem with Hillside. Sometime in early 1970 the Safemasters Company was contracted by Hillside to correct deficiencies we had cited. Safemasters Company only repaired and tried to correct those deficiencies that GSA instructed them to, and this left many faults uncorrected. After inspecting the repairs made by the Safemasters Company, I was still not satisfied that the cabinets would stand up under field operating conditions and so informed Mr. Brown, Quality Control GSA representative through their Unit at Crystal City in Arlington, Va. I was told that the repairs made by Safemasters Company were all of the repairs that were going to be made, and that everyone else; DOD, Navy, Army, etc. were accepting the cabinets (as modified). I still insisted that they were inferior in construction and would not meet our requirements. Furthermore, I learned it was practically impossible to procure any spare parts for these units. Since our Procurement Division told me that the Agency was going to accept

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STAT these units as is, I again turned to our OS/TB and they put me in touch with a [] Physical Security Branch, Office of the Provost Marshall General, on April 1970, at the Pentagon to discuss these Hillside Class VI cabinets. On the morning of 8 April 1970, I received a phone call from Chief, Materiel Facilities Branch, [] telling me that "forget the meeting at the Pentagon with DOD, it had been cancelled."

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